

**Richard Osterlind's  
THOUGHT SCAN**

**(A Professional Thought Reading Program)**

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**Exclusive Distributer  
Jeff Busby Magic, Inc.**

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## INTRODUCTION

The following act has been performed by myself for over 10 years. It has undergone many variations and what you have here is the culmination of that experience. I usually perform at corporate functions, such as dinners, where I am the after dinner speaker. My audience normally consist of between 100 to 300 people seated at tables. This act will work for an audience of as few as 25 and and large as 2000-3000. (That handling will be explained later) You will find that you will be able to perform this act in almost any performing situation. Comedy clubs and nightclubs are perfect as well as theaters both large and small. I have even performed this act at house parties where I worked off to the corner in a larger living room. Once the "work" was done, I actually moved to the center of the room and worked completely surrounded!

The effect is as follows:

The performer passes out small pieces of index card stock (size 2"X2") to the members of the audience. The spectators write personal information down on these cards and the cards are collected by the performer in opaque envelopes. After some interesting byplay with psychological suggestions, the performer begins to call out loud the personal thoughts of the audience members which they had written down. At this point in the proceedings, the mentalist is entirely "clean" and can work with absolutely no fear of detection.

The apparatus supplied is of the highest quality and should last a lifetime. It is exactly the same as I have been using all these years and mine has never been questioned. Please understand that what you have purchased can easily make a reputation for yourself and will repay your investment in the very first show.

# THE TOTAL ACT AND OBSERVATIONS

I have decided to give an overall view of my present show and to explain where the mindreading segment fits in and why I use it like I do. To understand my way of thinking and programming will better enable you use the prop in the correct way. You will also understand my philosophy of performing and will be better able to adapt the following instructions for you own personality and performing style.

I have always used the five-part programming rule outlined in the *Tarbell Course*. My usual opening is a bank night effect. This effect is not currently published, but will be in the very near future. The second effect is the linking of three borrowed wedding rings. This is published in my booklet *Two Professional Routines* and is still available. Next I use my marketed effect *The Radar Deck* and sometimes follow that up with a card calling routine using my *Breakthrough Card System* which is also still available. Next comes the act which you now own and which is really the highlight of my whole program. For the record, I usually end the show with a magazine test which is not yet published, but which will be very soon.

The bank night effect is light and funny and uses people in the audience without them having to leave their seats. Nail writing effects could be substituted here as long as you keep the effects fairly simple using lucky numbers and initials. You don't want to do anything "too impossible" just yet. The linking finger ring effect which follows is magic, but of a different character than that of a standard magic trick. The use of three spectators' rings takes the effect into a different dimension. I sometimes substitute the coin in the bottle at this point (my version is described in the *Two Professional Routines* book), but if I really want to keep the action on a more "psychic" level, I perform some spoon and key bending instead. The card effects play nicely in third place as the spectators initially think they are going to see some standard card tricks, but are baffled when cards, which were mentally selected, are named. This tends to "set them up" for the mindreading which is to come.

I have used this basic procedure for quite a long time. I find that the lighter effects up front get the audience liking the performer without them feeling too threatened. By gradually increasing the impossibility of the effects you can gradually suspend the belief factor of the audience to the point where they are ready to accept almost anything the performer does. Since the mindreading act which follows is so impossible looking, it would be foolhardy to go into it immediately without first conditioning the audience. Frankly, no one in their right mind would believe you could do what you are about to do without this pre-conditioning! By altering their level of believability, they will go away thinking you are the greatest mental giant of all time!

One last note concerning the old argument, "How far should the mentalist go in making claims of mental powers?"

I personally never use phrases such as telepathy, precognition, clairvoyance and telekinesis during my program. I explain up front that I am an entertainer and that I use normal abilities that we all possess, but honed through years of constant practice to the point where they may seem uncanny. During my performance I constantly talk about the "fairness" of the procedures and the fact that I do not use stooges or obtain information prior to my show. I then get on with business and let the audience infer what they will.

NOTE: By having that one magic effect in my show (the linking finger rings) I can always say, if pressed after the show by an over-inquisitive spectator, that I, of course, use some illusion in my performance. After all, I am an entertainer! This leaves it up to him to figure out just what parts of the show I am talking about! If further pressed, I simply say, "Well, obviously, effects like the linking wedding rings must be some type of illusion, right?" This puts the ball back in his court to figure out which effects are "like" the finger ring effect!

## THE APPARATUS

Notice the enclosed writing pad you have received with this outfit. The writing pad holder is handcrafted from wood and is covered with a durable formica. The pad itself is held in with double-sided tape (rubber cement or plastic adhesive may be substituted) and is totally ungimmicked in any way. The design of the holder was my own and I based the idea after the plastic desk-top holders for small sheets of paper which are quite common now. Although you will never find a holder like this in a stationary store I have never had its design challenged, especially if you follow the routine in this manuscript.

The flaps match the design of the above mentioned desk-top pads and appear to help hold in the paper. I also place my pencil in the flap when working and this likewise reinforces the design of the holder.

You will also notice that I have supplied samples of 2x2 pieces of index card stock (your printer can cut up a bunch of these cards for a very small cost) and some heavy Kraft envelopes (Size either # 10 or #11 are best). If you place about 6 cards on the pad and tilt it to the left, the cards will slide behind the left flap of the holder, align themselves in a neat stack and be completely hidden. If the right thumb is placed at point X in the illustration and the pad is tilted to the right, the cards will slide out in a stack and stop at the thumb. This simple procedure will make possible one of the most baffling mysteries in all of mentalism.

(Please note that left handed individuals will have no trouble adapting the apparatus for themselves. Simply use the flap on the right to hide the cards and reverse all the instructions which follow.)

To work the routine you will need a fairly large stack of the 2x2 index cards (about 2 inches high for an audience of 150 to 200) and about 15 to 20 of the Kraft envelopes. I also carry about 50 golf pencils encircled with a rubber band to distribute to those audience members who do not have anything to write with. You may be surprised, however, to discover just how many people do carry around pens and pencils in their pockets and purses. I often finish a show having only given out 10 to 20 pencils.

SIR 37 NBS 80  
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J40V  
RA-1

5-12-51  
C 17-46  
JOS  
JALCOM

KN 708  
WHYRE CACU-1  
12 000  
Tom  
4-13-52

LINDA  
4-17-71  
SAM  
092-48-4703

Remmo  
120007  
WADY  
7-18-77  
130-42-7319

12  
1  
14 DIXWELL  
828-4912

LINDA  
4-17-49  
SAM  
092-48-4705

# THE PRESENTATION

I am going to give the total presentation I am now using first and then later backtrack to fill you in completely on earlier ideas which were either discarded or are only used on special occasions.

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As a preface, when working the playing card routines, I pick up the writing pad and announce that I like to write as I work as it helps me get impressions. (Truer than not!) I then hand the pad (with my pen under the flap) to a nearby spectator to have him verify that nothing is written on it. He usually looks it over quickly and hands it back. I now perform the playing card routines while jotting notes on the pad. By using the pad in this way now, it later becomes less suspect when its use is essential.

After the card routines (at this point the audience is usually beginning to wonder just how much I am able to pick up mentally) I announce that I would now like to present an experiment that most of my audiences find the most intriguing since it involves their own private thoughts. I pick up the stack of cards and explain that in a few minutes I am going to go into the audience and distribute the cards to anyone who wants to participate. Here I ask that anyone who has a pen or a pencil in their pocket to remove it, but I also explain that I brought some pencils for those who don't have anything to write with. (As I say this I pick up the bunch of pencils in my other hand) I mention that there will be plenty of time to write and that the audience can share the pens and pencils so that everyone can participate. This is said so that the audience members will not each demand a pencil, but will realize that they can always borrow their neighbor's pen and still not be too late to be involved in the show. Actually, it is to your benefit later to have some persons still writing while others are finished and waiting to put their cards into the envelopes. (Note: You are going to find many minor points like these scattered throughout the manuscript and they should all be studied as they will make your work so much easier and will improve the overall effect on the audience.)

Now comes the time where I explain *what* it is they are to write. This is a very important segment of the procedure and is crucial for a successful



performance. The audience is instructed to each take **one card and to write on one side only**. They do not write their names on the cards, but rather are told to jot down a number of thoughts that they are going to try to mentally project to you in a few minutes. These thoughts should be items that mean something to them, that have personal significance. I usually mention, by way of example, how when I hear the date March 6th., I snap to attention because that is my birthday. The same thing happens when I hear my children's or wife's name.

I explain that the categories are names, such as your children's name or the name of some close relative; dates; such as your birthday or anniversary; numbers; such as your telephone number, licence plate number or social security number (here I add, "Who could possibly know that, but you?); places; such as your old address or a vacation spot; hobbies or special interests; etc. Anything that means something special to "you". The audience is told to mix the items up by writing one or two names, a couple of dates, a phone number, etc. They are instructed not to just write one or two thoughts, but at least five or six. (Here I add, "The chances of success are greater when you write down 5 or 6 thoughts.") And finally, they are instructed not to let **anyone** see what they have written, but rather to turn the cards face down in front of them when they are finished. I end this segment by stating that the cards will be collected in a few envelopes after they are done writing and that anyone finished writing should just hold up their hand so I will know that they are ready. (This is important!)

Before walking into the audience I usually look over the circumstances. If there are some tables that will be hard to reach, I mention, while still at the microphone, that perhaps some of the folks up front can help pass the cards back to the people seated behind them. I actually point to some of these potential trouble spots to avoid any delay when I walk into the audience.

Now I quickly step into the audience and start distributing cards. These are handed out in small batches without any thought to the pencils at this time. In an average room of about 150 people there are usually about 15 to 18 tables. Simply tossing a small stack on each table will enable you to cover the room in just a minute or two. Never try to negotiate between two tables too close to squeeze through. When this occurs, hand a larger batch to the table you can reach and ask them to pass them back. It looks terrible to step on anyone's toes or to accidentally knock over a drink. Be quick, courteous and graceful.

It is important to keep up a running line of patter when you are in the audience. An effective line I use when I approach a table is, "Are you having a good time so far?" They say, "Yes." I respond, "Well, we'll soon put a stop to that!" I also like to keep giving instructions about what to write as I am roaming around and sometimes add, "If you know any dirt about someone you're sitting with, now would be a good time to make it public!" When you come to people with pens in their hands, say, "Good. I see you came prepared tonight!"

Don't be abrasive! Be helpful and well-mannered. Instead of making this an awkward time for yourself and your audience, make it a fun time of getting to meet them personally. If you are working with a wireless lapel mike, you can use lines that everyone in the house can hear, taking the show, at this point, right down into the audience. If conditions are right and you don't think that you will offend anyone, you can scale a few cards into the far reaches of the room in the same way that magicians scale playing cards. (More about this later)

By this time some audience members will be asking for pencils and you can start handing them out. **Be very careful** not to stick anyone with the tip of a pencil! Always hand them out with the dull side towards them. It is best to simply drop one on the table when someone asks and don't forget to constantly mention how they should share the pencils and pens as much as possible. **Never throw a pencil to anyone.** You can, however, have some fun by pretending that you are going to throw one when you notice someone, at some distance away, asking for one. Wind up, stop at the last minute and then walk over to him and gently hand him the pencil.

By now you will be making your way back towards the stage as you pass out the pencils and, as you get to the microphone, toss the unused pencils into your case and pick up the stack of envelopes.

Turning to the audience, who will all be busy writing, you announce that you have a number of "heavy duty Kraft envelopes". I usually explain that it is impossible to see through these envelopes and that in a few minutes we will collect all of the cards in them. I also mention that there are not enough envelopes for each person to have their own, so we will have to share and collect a number of cards in each one. I now ask anyone who has finished writing to please hold up their hand. You will see a number of hands go up.

(I am going to jump ahead here and explain what it is you are going to accomplish over the next few minutes. What will happen is that in the process of passing out envelopes and collecting the written-on cards, you are going to steal between 6 and 8 cards which you will use for the mindreading segment. These cards will be stolen from the ideal spectators in a way that will be totally hidden from them and the rest of the audience. They will come from all areas of the room so that later you will appear to be getting impressions from everywhere. (Timing here is imperative so please pay strict attention.)

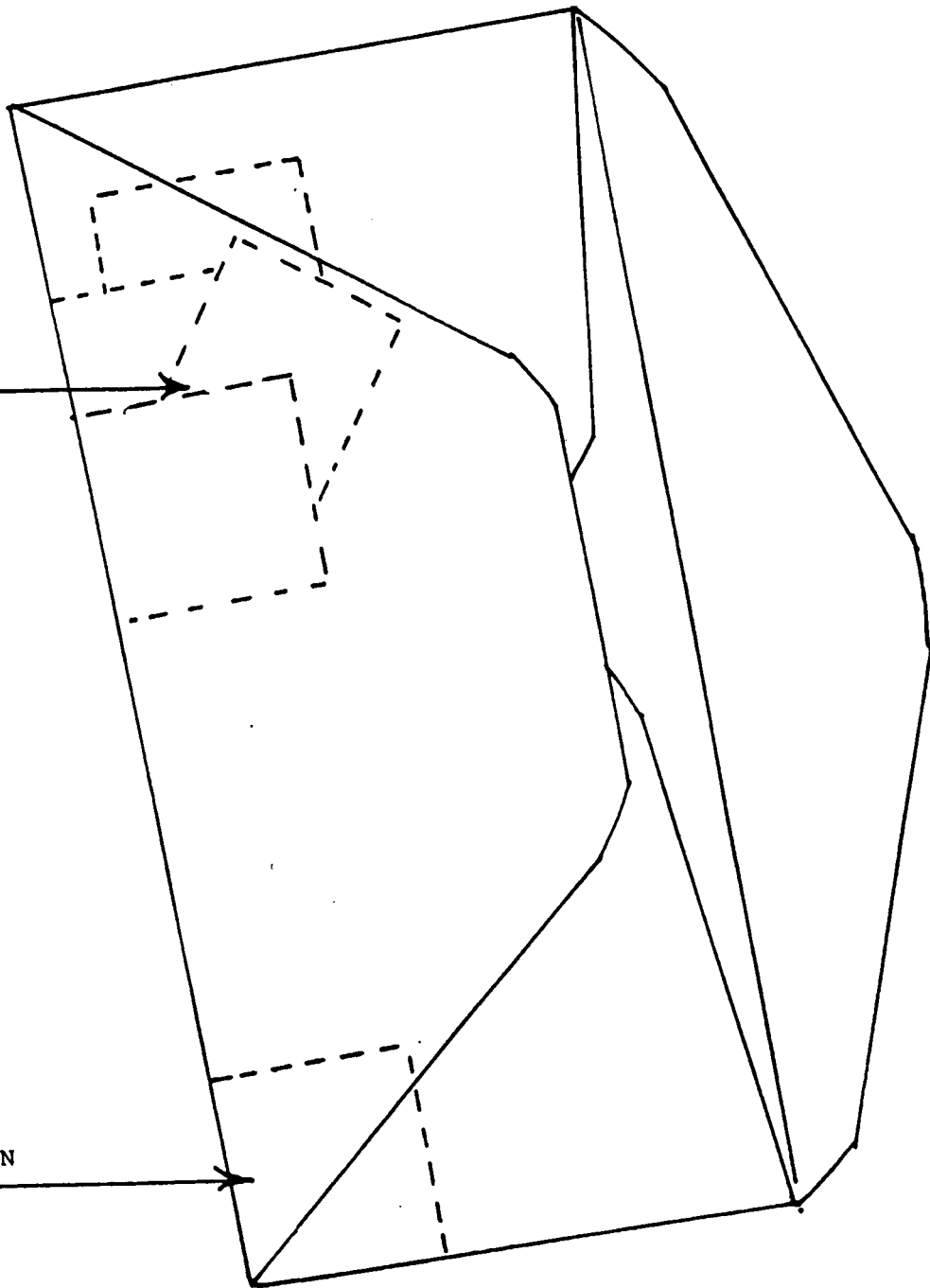
Hold the stack on envelopes in your left hand with the flap side up and the opening of the envelopes facing to your right. (See illustration.) Approach the people with their hands up and start taking the face-down cards with your right hand, sliding them, one at a time, into the top envelope. You are going to slide most of the cards into the far end of the envelope. (the end away from you) The cards that you want to use in the show will be placed into the envelope in the near end (that end closest to you.) I call this end the "stealing end" and it is actually in the corner. The illustration will make clear the exact positions of where the cards should be placed.

As you travel about the audience taking the face down cards from the spectators you will make determinations as to which people you want to use for the show. I tend to use mostly women, especially older ladies. Since you have been performing for awhile before this, you should be able to notice which spectators are looking at you with a certain amount of admiration or wonder. These folks make great subjects and usually act the most amazed later. Each time you see a good candidate, simply put their card in the near end of the envelope. Usually what happens is that you approach a table and two or three people are holding out cards. Take them one at a time and openly place them into the envelope getting the one you want on the stealing end. From the audience's point of view, absolutely nothing looks amiss. As soon as a person sees their card go into an envelope, without you even giving it a second glance, they will be sure that their card is safely tucked away with all the rest.

**NOTE:** Do not worry about the fact that the audience is not told to fold their cards, but rather to just turn them face down. This is never questioned and it makes perfect sense since you have to fit many cards in each envelope. There will be some who will hand you a folded card and

UNUSED CARDS

CARDS TO BE STOLEN



when this happens I usually just look at them and say, "You really don't trust me!"

As you move around the room the conditions will begin to change. At first, you will be running around collecting cards from the few quick writers and you will find that these cards will come from many sections of the house. You should be able to get between 4 and 5 cards at the stealing end of the envelope at this time. After awhile, however, more and more people will be finished writing and whole tables will be ready to have their cards collected. What I usually do is to grab an empty envelope from the bottom of the stack and hand it to a nearby table, asking that they all put their cards into it. I then advance to a different area, collect a few cards in the top envelope, one goes to the stealing end, turn to a different table and hand another empty envelope out from the bottom. I also sometimes ask a table to gather all their cards together in one pile and hand it to me face down. In the process of putting the cards into the envelope I again get one of the cards to the stealing end.

(It should be pointed out here that it is an easy matter to reach into the envelope and adjust the cards at the stealing end into a nice neat stack. This almost happens automatically since they are in the corner of the envelope. This also helps to keep them separate from the other cards in the envelope. It is important for the later steal that they are in the proper position.)

You will by now have the 6 to 8 cards necessary to carry out a successful performance. The steal, about to be described, is going to be completely covered from all angles. I still prefer to work it when I am at the back of the room or in a corner. Here is the working:

After placing a few cards into the top envelope the right hand neatly squares up the 6 to 8 cards in the near corner. The right hand comes out of the envelope and hands out an empty one from the bottom of the stack. You begin walking to a new spot and as you do the right hand goes back into the top envelope **palm down** and the right thumb slides under the cards. The right forefinger curls inwards and shoves the cards into a neat thumb palm. The above actions are the exact moves used to thumb palm a coin and I only elaborate for the benefit of the mentalist with absolutely no magical background.

Now the right hand comes out of the envelope and turns palm up as it takes the stack of envelopes out of the left hand. The palmed cards

will now be hidden under the stack of envelopes held in the right hand. The cards will be between the face of the bottom envelope and the right palm. If you practice this simple move in front of a mirror, you will see that the cards hug the envelope when coming out of the top one and traveling to the bottom of the stack. The angle of the right hand covers any flash especially if the hands are held right in front of the stomach.

As soon as the cards are stolen to the bottom, hand out the top envelope, containing the rest of the unused cards, with your left hand to a nearby spectator to continue collecting cards in.

Now you begin to make your way back to the stage and as you walk you hand out envelopes with your left hand from the top of the stack. (The actions I am about to explain will seem very brash, but they are exactly the ones I now use.)

I do not hand out all the envelopes, but keep about 3 or 4 by the time I get to the stage. The left hand removes the unused envelopes and tosses them into my case and immediately picks up the writing pad holder. The right hand now deposits the stolen cards onto the ledge of the holder and tips the pad to the left so that all the cards fall behind the flap and are hidden.

To understand why the above works so well is simple. Since most of the envelopes were handed out at the last minute most people are trying to get hold of one of them to put their card into. They do not know what is to come and most will feel that if they don't put their card in an envelope, they will not have followed instructions and will be left out of the act. They also have either seen their cards go directly into an envelope or have put them there themselves and since all the envelopes with cards inside are in the audience, there is no reason to suspect your actions.

There was a time when I used to casually place the cards into my trouser pocket and then later retrieve them. In practice, when I saw that no one was paying any attention to me when I returned to the stage, I decided that it was wasted effort! There is one possibility, however, that you may want to consider. When I wear a suit with a vest I have found that the outer left vest pocket is ideally suited to be used in the routine. Simply use the envelopes for cover as the right fingers deposit the palmed cards into the pocket. Later, when you want to get them on the ledge of the writing pad, hold the pad in front of your stomach as this provides perfect cover for the right hand's retrieval of the cards. A cummerbund can also be used in this

same way if you are wearing a tuxedo.

I mention all the the above variations for completeness. The fact of the matter is that the cards are so small in size that you can work with perfect confidence without resorting to ditching the cards and then later retrieving them. I have, on a number of occasions, had so many people ask for envelopes that I ran out before I got back to the stage! All I did was to simply keep my hand at my side with the thumb-palmed cards and walk back to the microphone. The stack of cards is no bigger than a silver dollar and far smaller than a playing card. This may seem dangerous on paper, but in actual practice there is no problem. Remember, the audience has no idea what you are going to do and there is no reason for them to be suspicious of you at this time..

Now you are back at the microphone and as you look out you see the audience passing around envelopes in all areas of the house. You ask anyone who still has a card to hold up their hand and you have the nearest envelope passed to them. Now you explain that you will get back to those envelopes in a few minutes and you ask those who are holding them to seal them up.

I now use a delay technique which really makes the act impossible to figure out and is a logical introduction to the main body of the mindreading segment. I explain that much of my work is based on psychology and that I study the ways in which people respond and react. As I am talking I first remove a pen from my pocket and then tilt the pad to the right, using the right thumb as a stop, and get the cards to the center of the bottom of the pad where they are visible. Notice that since the sides of the pad are raised, your angles are well covered. As I pretend to be writing notes to myself, I am really adjusting the card on the face of the stack so that I can see it clearly and copy its contents onto the pad. This is all done as I talk about playing cards and say, "Earlier, I tried a couple of tests with some playing cards. I want everyone to think of a card right now. Now I know from my studies that many people think of the Ace of Spades! How many people thought of that card?" The audience response is usually very positive. Then I add, "Quite a few!, but I get an impression that a number of you didn't think of the Ace, but rather the Queen of Hearts! How many of you thought of that one? Raise your hands" You will find that quite a few ladies will think of that one and a number of men, also. What I am doing here is using the old psychological choices ruse to take up time

while I copy the information from the stolen cards onto the pad. As each card is copied I slide it to the left under the flap and adjust the new one so it can be read. Also please note the subtle use of the psychological forces. I do not present them initially as mindreading stunts, but rather, as just what they are - psychological forces. This gives you believability in front of intelligent groups, **but there is more**. Notice how I said that the Ace of Spades was a psychological choice, but **"I get an impression** that a number of you thought of the Queen of Hearts!" This puts you back into mindreading in a very subtle way that even a very intelligent audience will have problems deciphering! One moment you are letting them in on a little trick and the next minute you are picking up on their thoughts!

I do this a number of times while I am copying the cards. I might say, "Think of a color. Psychologically the most chosen color is red!" Audience responds. Then I say, "But I get the impression that a number of you thought of the color red first and then thought, 'That's too easy!' and changed your mind to blue!" This usually knocks them out because so many will have done that! Again, notice how first it is psychological and then it is mindreading.

The same tactic can be used with the old 37 ruse. The audience thinks of a two digit number, both digits are odd and both are different. "The number I wrote here on my pad is 37. But I get the impression that many of you missed it by 2 and thought of 35!"

There are many forces like this which all mentalists know and don't be afraid to use even very simple ones. Since you are demonstrating how psychology plays a role in your work, you can't lose. Even if some in the audience second guess you, they will not think you a charlatan, but will consider themselves as very smart individuals to be able to figure out this kind of thing! They are in on it "with" you and not "against" you.

By the time you have gone through about half a dozen of these psychological forces you will have copied down all the information from the cards. The by-play that comes up with the above along with the time taken up by the audience reactions, especially when you hit, will give you all the time that you need. There have been many times when I have only had to use 3 forces before I was finished copying the information. Of course, you pretend to be writing down the force items and impressions you are receiving while you speak as that is why you supposedly are using



the pad. When you have everything copied, slide the cards behind the left flap so that you can casually turn it towards the audience without any of the cards being seen.

(The information for each card should be grouped together as shown in the illustration so that you will know exactly which facts go with each person.)

Now comes an idea that I am really proud of.

As you finish up the last force you look over the information and choose one person who has written a date. I have never done a show where at least one individual did not write down a date. Dates seem to be the most common items written. As you memorize the date try to remember at least two other pieces of information about that person. With practice you will find that you will be able to remember almost everything he has written.

Announce that you have also discovered that it is a mathematical fact that if you were to call out a date, even if there are less than 365 people in the audience, you will probably hit someone's birthday or an important date in their lives. (This works best if the audience is less than 365.) Think for a moment and then decide to call out the "random" date that you just memorized. Ask if that means anything to anyone.

As you do this you casually place the writing pad into your briefcase. I personally use a catalog case which opens at the top and is perfect for carrying my act in, but any type of brief case will work for what follows. As you place the pad away, as soon as it is out of view, tip it in such a way as to dump the cards into your case. I cannot give you the exact moves for this as it depends on the type of case you have and where it is positioned on stage. Some performers may even have a table with a shelf in back or a larger suitcase off to the side. You certainly will have some kind of container for your props and that is where you put the pad dumping out the cards at the same time.

There are a couple of possibilities here. Either one person will respond or more than one will respond. Either way, you call attention that you did "hit" on the date. Here, as before, you appear to be playing percentages.

Now if only one person has responded, you look intently at them and suddenly ask if the name \_\_\_\_\_ means something to them. Here I am referring to one of the bits of information that you have remembered. It can be a name, another date, a place, etc. Just don't start naming a social security number or anything too complicated! At this point keep it **simple**.

The person usually replies in shock and you should get a huge round of astonished applause here. Usually they say something like, "Yes, That's my son's name!!" or something to that extent. You make it appear that the thought just struck you out of thin air and the effect on the audience is terrific because, all of a sudden, you appear to be doing pure mindreading.

Now what happens if more than one person responds to the date? There are a few different ways to handle that situation. If the date contains the year, i.e. May 13, 1946, you can pump the responding spectators by asking what was the significance of the date. Often that will give you the information you need to know to determine which person to work with. In the above example the date would probably be someone's birthday, but it could also be an older couple's anniversary. Sometimes you will remember who you stole the card from and that will enable you to continue. If all else fails then you simply ask, " Does the name \_\_\_\_\_ mean anything to either of you?" When one of them responds, this can be, and usually is, just as strong.

**NOTE:** Don't be taken in by that old line of thinking that says a real mentalist should be able to know whose thoughts he is dealing with. It is much better to be imperfect, catching thoughts at random which need to be verbally identified with the members of the audience. This makes you appear much more "human". To be too perfect will make your act look ludicrous. This is also the reason why I do not have the spectators write their names on the cards. To call out someone's name and then tell them what they have written is ridiculous. Everyone in the audience will be sure that you were somehow able to see the cards!

At this point you could call out another piece of information if you want. I usually do not. I told you to remember a couple of thoughts just in case more than one person responds to the second question as well! This almost never happens, but when it does, make it look like a remarkable coincidence that both people again thought of the same thought and you

were able to read their minds. Then you can zero in on the right spectator with another piece of information. As I said before, however, the normal occurrence is that you call out the name after the date and stun both the spectator and the audience.

Now we are approaching the real meat of the act. You stop the action and ask all those in the audience who have the sealed envelopes to hold them up. You request one of these spectators to quickly collect them and bring them up to the stage.

As this is happening, you walk over to your briefcase and retrieve the pad. There is plenty of time to make sure that all of the cards have fallen out of the pad. Walk back to the microphone with the pad held casually in the left hand.

The spectator approaches the stage and you take all the envelopes with the right hand and hold them high above your head as you dismiss the assistant. The words I use here go something like this:

"In these envelopes are the cards on which you recorded your thoughts and sealed in these envelopes yourself. I asked you to jot down these thoughts so that you would be forced to make decisions. You are locked to those decisions because you actually wrote them down. Furthermore, if I ask you to concentrate on your thoughts, you will actually be able to visualize those cards in your mind's eye. You will be able to picture exactly how your card looked and remember the order of the items you chose. If we have any disputes, we can always open them up and check on them, but hopefully, I will not have to touch these envelopes again."

Here the envelopes are held high above the head as I walk over to my briefcase and toss in the envelopes.

"In case you are wondering what I do with these envelopes; when I get home my wife and I open them up, read the cards and laugh like crazy all night long!!"

This gets a nice laugh and you are now set to go.

**Before proceeding**, let me touch on an important item. Notice that I do not try to cover up the fact that I will be attempting to get the information which the audience has written down. How often, when reading about acts like this, have you read the advice of the author telling you to never remind the audience that they have written down anything? You are instructed to pretend that you are getting random facts and thoughts about the person who you are reading. That may work for awhile, but sooner or later one of the spectators will speak up and announce that everything the mentalist has called out was on their slip or card. This often happens without the spectator even wanting to be malicious. The mentalist says something like, "There is a name in your mind that you want me to tell you." The spectator responds with, "Well I wasn't thinking of it, but I did write down a name!" An intelligent audience picks up on this immediately and it takes away immensely from the performer's prestige.

I have long ago developed a different method of working which avoids this problem in a fashion that makes perfect logic to even skeptical audiences. It will seem strange to the well-read mentalist, but hear me out. It is as follows:

The reason the audience writes down their thoughts is so that they can better concentrate on them. It is these thoughts that they have decided to send to me and so they are the ones I want them to think about. They must visualize their thoughts for me to pick them up and the only thoughts that they can visualize are the ones written down. Also, their private affairs are none of my business and so I stick to only the thoughts that they want to send to me.

All this makes perfect sense to me and seems to make sense to my audiences. They never seem to mind that I am dealing with what they wrote down and I prefer to be entirely open about this point. The effect is every bit as strong and there is no worry that anyone will discover that you are misleading the audience!

**There is more, however.** You will see, as we advance through the next segment, that you will present the act in such a way as to make it virtually impossible for anyone to find fault with your logic, without reducing the strength of the act one bit. The presentation is routined in such a way as to always put you one step ahead of the audience. When we get to the really advanced ideas, you will see that you will call out thoughts not written

down! Since the audience believes you are working with only the written thoughts, this will hit them like a bombshell! The effect becomes twice as great as in other similar acts. But now, back to the routine.

So here you stand at the microphone, with everything you need to completely blow away your audience for the next 15 minutes, already written on your pad! If you review the instructions up to this point you will see that you have done absolutely nothing to arouse the suspicion of the audience in any way and yet the "work" is finished. Most of the audience members put their cards in the envelopes themselves and they saw you actually start to read their minds while they still had the envelopes in their possession. When a spectator collected the envelopes and brought them to you, they saw that you never gave them a second glance. You just held them high in the air and put them in your case. You immediately walked back to the microphone with nothing in your hands except your pad and pen. The pad can now be held casually at your side or turned to the audience because there is nothing to hide!

The audience is instructed to concentrate on their secret thoughts. They are told to visualize what their cards looked like, what items they jotted down and the order of the thoughts. You pretend to write while looking around the room. You are also planning in your mind which people you will work with first and which you will save for near the end of the routine. People who have written down social security numbers should be saved for the end as well as any who have written unusual thoughts.

I usually start with someone who has written a couple of names. For instance, "Does the name Norman mean anything to anyone?" Use the first item on each list because you instructed the audience to think of their thoughts in order. Slowly "pick up" on the other thoughts playing each one for all you can get out of it. Be hesitant and try to make it look like the real thing. You must be an actor to really play the part well and you must actually believe in what you are doing if you want the audience to believe also.

I have a number of mental tricks I use whenever performing mentalism. One of these ideas is used extensively here. I look at the pad and try to memorize as much information as I can with a quick glance. As I start to "read the spectator's" mind, I try to recall as much as possible from memory. The outward appearance of trying to remember something is the

same as if you were picking up thoughts by telepathy! (I use this same idea when working with the *Breakthrough Card System*. The thought process necessary to quickly compute cards looks like you are reading minds!) Of course, if I do forget something, I immediately begin writing on the pad and get the information.

Throughout the act, whenever you want to get applause, simply finish reading the spectator's mind and say, "Thank you!" You will find that this will only be necessary a few times as the audience usually applauds automatically every time you successfully name a thought. I reserve it for the final thought when I am ready to move on to a new person.

You can, at this point, ask the audience to concentrate again on their thoughts. I don't do that! Instead, I look at my pad and say, "A few moments ago I wrote the date \_\_\_\_\_ on my pad. Does this mean anything to anybody?" Do you see the logic here? I have already asked the audience to think of their thoughts one at a time. I spent some time writing while they were doing this and before I started to work with any one person. Supposedly, I wrote down a number of impressions that hit me all of a sudden and now I am going back over them one by one trying to match them up with the different spectators. There is no way that anyone can say that they weren't thinking of that thought when I named it! Just as long as you make sure that they have all tried to picture their thoughts in their mind earlier.

It also helps when I have a bit of information that could pertain to a number of spectators. Let's say that the first item on someone's list is the name John followed by the name Mary. Individually many people might respond to either John or Mary since they are such common names. What I do is say, "A few minutes ago I wrote down the name John. I also wrote down the name Mary beside it. I'm not sure if both of these thoughts came from the same person or not. Do both of these names mean something to anyone?" You are then able to pin point the information to the right individual.

I am now going to give you a number of ideas dealing with specific types of information. These stem from having performed this act for over 10 years. Please study these carefully.

When you have a phone number, first inform the spectator that he has

some type of number in the back of his mind. You think it is a phone number. You then ask if it is his or someone else's. Whatever the responses, tell him to imagine in his mind that he has a touch tone phone and that he is calling this number. Tell him to disregard the area code and the number 1 for long distance. Have him mentally bring his finger down on the first number. You, by now, have memorized the number and have the pad at your side while you look thoughtfully up into the air. "Did you just bring your finger down on the 7?" The spectator responds and the audience responds! "Bring your finger down on the next number. Did you move up a row and go to the right?" Spectators agrees. "Did you hit the 6?" Etc. This is strong stuff and makes it appear that you are looking right into his head!

After performing for awhile, you will find that you will recognize certain types of information and you will be able to make a lot more out of these thoughts than what is written down. I have developed certain ways of handling these occurrences that will make your work seem uncanny. The problem is that what is to follow is different for each performer. It is based on each individual's knowledge and personality. I can only start you down the road and then let you find your own way. This is where the really "good stuff" comes in and where you will leave other mentalists far behind in the dust!

Let me give you an actual occurrence of something that happened at the last show I performed at while writing this. I was "reading" a woman who was responding well when I noticed that one of the items on her list was "Lady". My own dog's name is "Lady" and, having performed this act for so many years, I know that pets' names are a favorite item written down, especially if you suggest it in the beginning of the act. This is approximately what I said to her:

"You have the thought of some type of animal in your mind that you're trying to send to me, right?" She smiles and says, "Yes." "The animal is a dog. Is that correct?" (I said that because no one names a cat "Lady"!)

Again she acknowledges that I'm right. "It is not a very large dog is it?" ("Lady" is the kind of a name for a small dog) She says, "No, it's a small dog!" I say, "I see in my mind that the dog is two colors!" (Note: Almost every pet in the world is two colors! Even if that second color is only a little touch of white on its neck or paws.) She thinks for a moment and says, "Yes, that's right!" Because of her hesitation, I immediately know

that it must only be a small patch of that second color and I inform her of that. She agrees. Then I say to her, (pay strict attention here) "Did you write down the word "dog" on your card?" She says, "No." I say, "Did you write down anything about what kind of dog you have, how big it is or what color your dog is?" Again she replies, "No!" I say, "Have I talked to you before the show or set up anything with you ahead of time?" She says, "No!" I say, "Is your dog's name Lady?" She responds with an astonished, "Yes!" The audience, of course, is stunned and completely baffled. Notice the way in which the questions are set up and then later restated with just enough variance to make it seem like I actually told her the type of dog she has and exactly what color it is. Also notice how I implied that the dog's name was not written down even though I never really said that. You can see how this style of working can completely destroy the audience's reasoning process.

I have given you one example, but there are countless variations. Study life, people, places, hobbies and all things around you. For example; I have spent countless hours in Newport, RI, Nantucket, MA, and Martha's Vineyard when performing in local hotels. When I see one of these places listed on someone's card, I know it means a vacation. I find out if they have ever been to this place before and, if they have, I pick up thoughts about restaurants, favorite sites, activities, etc., that are indicative of that particular vacation spot. All this is said before naming the actual location. Sometimes I don't even name it for awhile! I pretend that I am picking up all these other thoughts, but can't get the actual place! After much mental effort I finally get the actual name. Once again, I make sure that the spectator admits that he or she did not write anything down about all those items which I named !

Another tactic is to learn catch-phrases about different businesses, sports, hobbies, etc., You can use one of these catch-phrases in your show and appear to be picking out obscure bits of information from the spectator's mind that even you do not know the meaning of! I can't tell you how well that plays.

There is not much more I can say about this idea other than to use common sense and "think". Since you will be taking the cards home with you after the show, when you get home, read all the cards and think of how you might have used information from those cards. See if there were any bits of information that you could have expanded on. By doing this, you will train yourself to do it automatically when you see that same item in some future show.



Now let me move on to the ending of the act. As I mentioned earlier, I like to save a social security number for the very end of my show. You start "reading" that person and name other bits of information. While doing this, you **must** memorize the entire social security number. It is really not very difficult at all. Now here is how you present this final blockbuster.

You look at the individual and say, "I see that you are trying to ask me a mental question. You are asking me if I can tell you some type of number. I don't think it is a phone number or licence plate number, is it?" He says, "No." I say, "Wait a minute. You are asking me if I can tell you your social security number! Is that it? Is is your social security number?" He has to say, "Yes!"

Do you see what has happened here? What you must do is maneuver him verbally into agreeing with you and make it seem as though he were only thinking the question, "What is my social security number?" By being unsure about what type of number it is, you are asking the spectator, from his perspective, what type of number he has written down. When he answers in the affirmative, which he has to do if you again read the above paragraph, he thinks he is agreeing with you that it is a social security number. The audience, however, thinks that he is agreeing that you have read his mind and asked his mental question out loud! It looks like he has challenged you mentally and they will not have the slightest clue that the number was ever written down. (Note: If after the show a few people learn that he did write down the number, so what! Remember, you told the audience that you would be trying to pick up the thoughts which they recorded on the cards. Besides, how can the spectator argue that he was not thinking the question, "Can you tell me my social security number?" If he wrote it down then he obviously wanted you to try to guess it!)

You further enhance the illusion by asking him, "Do you know your number by heart or do you have to look at your social security card?" By pretending that you do not know if he is already thinking of it, you indirectly imply that he has not already written it down.

**You place the pad off to the side and take the microphone off the stand. Approach the spectator, while holding the microphone, and have him think the digits one at a time. Name the first three numbers in your best manner. Stop for a second to mentally rest and then ask him to concentrate on the next number. (For the sake of example let's say the**

number is 124-24-1799) All of a sudden say, "Wait a minute. Did you just think of two numbers?" (I have found that over 75% of all people who have their social security numbers memorized, do it in groupings) He says, "Yes!" You say, "And in your mind, you didn't think two - four, but rather twenty four! Didn't you?" The spectator will probably faint because that's exactly the mental process they will have gone through if they did think of two numbers!!!! This is so strong that it is proof positive that you can read minds.

You now ask that he think of only one digit at a time and you finish reading his mind. You do so dramatically with no props at all in your hand. From the audience viewpoint, it is the look of absolutely pure mindreading. There is no finer way to end the act!

I usually finish with the magazine prediction. If you review the whole show, you will see that everything up until now has been based on telepathy. Be ending with an effect of precognition or mind control, you add a slightly different flavor to the show.

The running time for the above is approximately 45 minutes to one hour depending on the speed of the performer and how much feed back you get from the spectators during your performance. If I am booked for a two hour-plus show, this is where I begin my hypnotism segment.

## Notes and Additional Ideas

### Idea 1:

I have based the above act on the typical situation where the mentalist is performing for a group of about 100 to 300 people. There is a slightly different procedure for working a large theater audience.

I am sure you will appreciate the fact that the reason the envelopes are collected is to avoid audience members from later checking them to see if their cards are still inside. In a small group it would be possible for an alert spectator to keep an eye on where the envelope that contains his card ends up. The act is designed to make the audience think, at the time, that the envelopes will either stay with them or be used openly during the presentation. When they are collected and tossed into the case it is too late to be caught in any wrong doing and you completely eliminate the chances of detection.

In a theater setting it would take up too much time to operate in the same fashion. Instead, the following procedure should be used.

Cards and pencils can be distributed both by the performer and some ushers or assistants. Here is one place where card throwing would fit in perfectly. The mentalist can have a lot of fun scaling cards into all areas of the audience! The way to do it is to scale a stack of about 10 to 15 cards. You will find that you can toss these quite a distance. They will stay together for most of the way and then break up over the heads of the audience and fall down like snowflakes! I would not use this in a corporate show, but for college audiences it is perfect. Do not toss pencils! Hand those out carefully.

You will need far more envelopes for this presentation. Have a stack of about 50. These are passed out throughout the entire house in a very random way. As you roam about, there will be many individuals who will hand you their cards. Place these in the top envelope and quickly move on. You can then continue in the same way as the main instructions getting about 6 to 8 cards in the top envelope and make your steal. Another option, in this situation, is to make two or three steals, placing the cards into your pocket. Since you are moving around in a large theater, there is little chance of this being spotted. The vest pocket steal is particularly appropriate here. Of course, if you have trained assistants, they can make

the steals for you. These helpers can then load up your pad backstage and bring it out to you at the proper time.

After you return to the stage, have everyone who has an envelope seal it up. Then have them toss them to the floor! This is a great strategy as no one will later want to go around picking up dirty envelopes off the floor to look through them! In a college crowd, if you ask them to toss the envelopes down, you will see them go flying everywhere! Young people like to have fun. It also becomes impossible to determine where each envelope came from or went to. The act is then ended in the normal way.

## Idea 2:

When I first started doing this act, I did not write down the information on the pad, ditch the cards and then start the readings. Instead, I just pretended to write as I got the information directly off the cards. The design of the pad and the way the hands cover the sides offer ideal cover from all angles. The cards can be slid behind the flap at any time so that the front can be casually shown to the audience. On occasion, I still work this way, but prefer the method I've outlined above. I mention it here for your consideration and so you will have the complete history of the effect.

## Idea 3:

The flap can be used to conceal more more than just stolen billets. Two ideas that I have played with and used are for *The Paul Fox Miracle Gimmick* and Ray Grismer's *What's My Sign?* both available from Jeff Busby Magic., Inc. Both of these wonderful effects use a small key card and both of these key cards are just the right size to be hidden behind the flap of the pad. For the "Grismer" effect you will be able to pick up the pad and tell two or three people their Zodiac signs without them having to leave their seats or write anything down! For the *miracle gimmick* effect, you can divide a deck of cards among 5 audience members and have each one merely think of a card. Someone now gathers the deck together and keeps it! You call out random cards, making notes on your pad, and then name all the cards! Both of these effects could be worked before the mindreading routine without any hindrance to the main effect. In fact, they would enhance it.

#### **Idea 4:**

The design of the pad is also suited to hold folded pieces of paper securely behind the flap which can be written on and later loaded into a prediction container of some sort. As an example, I do a combination lock effect by Ray Grismer where audience members call out numbers and these numbers later form the combination that opens the lock. As they call out the numbers I openly record them on the pad. What the audience doesn't know is, at the same time, I am writing the numbers on a piece of folded paper held in place (with part of the paper showing) behind the flap of the pad. The board is never turned towards the audience (there is no need or reason to) so that quite a large area of paper can be exposed. When the spectator opens the lock with those numbers, the misdirection is so strong that I have plenty of time to refold the paper, steal it out of the pad and load it into my wallet! I can now take out the wallet, take out the folded paper and show that the combination the audience called out is indeed the combination to the lock which I recorded earlier.

As you experiment with the pad and holder I am sure you will come up with other useful ways this device can be used.

#### **Idea 5:**

In my book, *The Surrounded Slow Motion Center Tear*, I outline a billet switch using a *Bic* lighter. I mentioned in that book that I sometimes use the switch to acquire some spectators' thoughts before the show. If you are a newcomer to this type of act, this procedure can be very helpful. It allows you to think over the information you have before going on stage. You can plan the order of the spectators and can think up many lines to use ahead of time. This will reduce any nervousness on the part of the performer the first few times he does this act. If you do not own the above work, you can also use clipboards to get the necessary information.

#### **Idea 6:**

I have already mentioned the idea of saving the slips used from past shows and studying the items that are written. You will be amazed when you see how often the same themes are repeated. You will also learn how your initial instructions will alter what the spectators write. After all these years I still go home and review the cards from each performance.

## **Idea 7:**

Finally I would like to touch upon what sources to check out to get the knack of doing this type of work. Although many books deal with this type of act, I have personally found that the best place to learn quickly the style to use and what to say is from listening to audio cassettes of the great Joseph Dunninger and from the audio and video recordings of *The Amazing Kreskin*. The Dunninger tapes are widespread and, with some inquiry, you should be able to locate someone who has a set to let you use. Kreskin, of course, is the "King" and he still appears on numerous TV shows and on specials which he produces annually. There are also countless videos floating around the fraternity of Kreskin's earlier shows and his syndicated TV show, *The Amazing World of Kreskin*. I actually listen to Dunninger tapes on my way to a performance, to get myself in the right frame of mind. If you want to be successful, learn from those who are proven successes!

I hope all of the above gives you what you need to make this act a huge success for yourself. I have sincerely tried to give you all of the "inside" stuff. I look forward to discussing these ideas with you when we run into each other at some convention or lecture and I am always open to ideas and inquiries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Osterlind". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Osterlind" clearly distinguishable.

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